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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [IT](#) [UK](#) [EUN](#) [ESDP](#)  
SUBJECT: FRATTINI-STRAW MEETING READOUT

Classified By: DCM EMIL SKODON. REASON: 1.5 (B)(D)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: During an August 29 meeting in Rome, FM Frattini and UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw agreed on the necessity of a quick finish for the Intergovernmental Conference on the EU constitution, but Straw cautioned that some items in the current draft would need clarification before it would be acceptable to UK lawmakers. They agreed that the discussion of EU security structures should be brought back to the EU at 15 (25). Straw welcomed Frattini's proposal for a MEPP Quartet meeting on the margins of the UNGA, and both thought it unlikely that France would agree to list Hamas on a terrorist "black list". Straw registered Frattini's concern that the arms sanctions against Libya were impeding Tripoli's ability to deal with illegal immigration, but underlined that Qadhafi had a long list of conditions to satisfy before sanctions could be lifted. Straw agreed to take under consideration Frattini's concerns on the UK proposal for UNSC reform. End Summary.

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Constitution/IGC  
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[¶2.](#) (C) On September 3, MFA Western Europe Office Director Pio Mariani briefed poloff on FM Frattini's August 29 meeting with UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. They spent a significant portion of the meeting discussing the draft EU constitution and Intergovernmental Conference, scheduled to begin on October 4 in Rome. Frattini stressed the GOI's preference to finish the IGC by the end of the Italian Presidency, in order to complete the three-month translation process into all EU languages prior to the spring European Parliamentary elections and formal accession of new members. Therefore, emphasized Frattini, the IGC could not reopen large areas of the current draft for extended debate; its role will be to fine tune and perhaps give a bit more detail and precision to the existing language.

[¶3.](#) (C) Straw agreed in principle that a December finish to the IGC would be optimal, but had reservations about Frattini's minimalist view of the role of the IGC. He said that the document would need consensus not just among the framers, but among all citizens of EU member states - most or all would be voting for or against the document in referenda. In the UK, for instance, there was substantial concern among MPs and ordinary citizens over defense/security issues, the authority of the new "Minister of Foreign Affairs for Europe" and his/her role in international organizations and the question of whether unanimity would be retained for decisions dealing with EU finances and Common Foreign and Security Policy. These are red lines for the British, and Straw thought it was possible that the UK would have some "alternate wording" for the draft constitution ready to present at the September 5-6 informal EU FMs' meeting (Gymnich) at Riva del Garda.

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Gang of Four  
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[¶4.](#) (C) Straw and Frattini agreed that the German, French, Belgian, Luxembourger proposal to establish a separate ESDP planning operation at Tervuren was not acceptable. Straw said that if the EU started now down the road towards dismantling the Berlin-plus agreement, within ten years there would be little left of the transatlantic alliance. Straw and Frattini agreed that one goal of the IGC should be to bring debate on security and foreign policy back to 15 (25).

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MEPP  
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[¶5.](#) (C) Frattini underlined the need for a regional "Marshall Plan" to improve the economic status of individuals on all sides of the conflict. Straw agreed to Frattini's proposal for a Quartet meeting on the margins of UNGA on September 22. Hamas is on the agenda for the Gymnich, but Frattini and Straw concurred that French agreement to add Hamas to the terrorist "black list" was unlikely.

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Iran

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**16.** (C) Straw raised the case of former Iranian Ambassador to Argentina Hadi Soleimani, arrested and ordered held in London on August 21 for alleged complicity in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires. He asked Frattini for continued Italian support in explaining to the Government of Iran that there was little HMG could do to get the courts to drop the case. Mariani said that Italy had in fact already made a number of demarches in Tehran, urging the Iranians not to blow the case out of proportion, and stressing that Iran "needs all the friends it can get". Threatening to lower diplomatic relations with the UK, and by extension the EU, would not elevate Iran's standing in the eyes of the international community.

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Libya

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**17.** (C) Frattini said that he hoped the French would soon reach a satisfactory agreement with Libya, as the UK had, over the Lockerbie bombing. The government of Italy wants to start discussions, first in Brussels then, after a common EU position is forged, at the UN on lifting, at least partially, arms sales sanctions against Libya. Frattini told Straw that Libya does not have the tools to control its own borders and the increasing flow of illegal aliens into Italy and other EU countries. Straw did not discount the possibility of eventual discussions on sanctions, but noted that an agreement with France is just one in a series of conditions that Libya must satisfy before the UN sanctions are lifted.

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Security Council Reform  
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**18.** (C) Frattini told Straw that the British initiative on UN Security Council reform had "created problems" for Italy. Simply enlarging the number of Permanent Members (which would exclude Italy) seemed unfair to Frattini and would create problems with other large excluded countries in South America and Asia. A more equitable plan, pushed by Italy, would expand the number of non-permanent members on a more frequent rotation based on "benchmarks". Straw promised only to take Frattini's concerns under consideration. Mariani noted that under the British plan, France, UK, and Germany would have permanent seats in the Security Council, effectively killing any debate on the possibility of moving to a single EU seat.

SEMBLER

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